

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 002569

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV  
USDOC FOR 4430/MAC/ASIA/OPB/VLC/HPPHO  
STATE FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA KEN ISAACS, GREG GOTTLIEB  
STATE FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA MICHAEL MARX, ROB THAYER, BART  
DEEMER  
STATE FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA DAA WILLIAM GARVELINK  
BANGKOK FOR OFDA SENIOR REGIONAL ADVISOR TOM DOLAN  
KATHMANDU FOR OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR WILLIAM BERGER  
GENEVA FOR USAID NANCY KYLOH  
USDA FOR FAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: VIETNAM HIT BY WORST TYPHOON IN TEN YEARS

11. Summary: A typhoon has caused severe damage to coastal and mountainous areas of northern Vietnam. While loss of lives was minimized due to the Government of Vietnam's (GVN) early preparation and evacuation efforts, an estimated 200,000 people lack food and perhaps a greater number of people suffer drinking water shortages caused by seawater penetration in dug wells as far as three to four kilometers inland. About 1,500 houses in the coastal area have been completely submerged while another 15,500 houses lack proper roofs. According to Vietnam News Agency, Typhoon Damrey has caused an estimated VND 3.3 trillion (roughly USD 207 million) in damages. International organizations including UNDP, UNICEF, Red Cross and Oxfam have mobilized to provide emergency relief assistance. The GVN has requested international assistance from foreign nations. Mission Vietnam will continue to monitor the situation and is considering to request emergency disaster assistance. End Summary.

12. On September 26, 2005, areas of northern Vietnam were hit by Typhoon Damrey (named Storm Number 7 in Vietnam), which the GVN has described as the "most vigorous" storm in the past ten years. With wind forces reaching up to 132 kilometers per hour, the storm reached wind speeds equal to Beaufort Scale 12 or Category Two hurricane. The typhoon created storm surges of 3-4 meters in coastal provinces of Quang Ninh, Hai Phong, Thai Binh, Ninh Binh, Nam Dinh and Thanh Hoa and localized flash floods in the northern upland provinces of Yen Bai and Lao Cai.

13. According to Mr. Nguyen Tu Cuong of the People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), as Typhoon Damrey approached the GVN conducted its first-ever major storm evacuation. The GVN evacuated 600,000 people away from the coastline, reinforced sea dikes to ensure human safety and called 40,000 fishing vessels back to harbor. As a result of the swift response to early storm warning systems and effectiveness of contingency plans funded over the past five years by USAID/OFDA, human losses in coastal areas were minimized, with less than ten deaths. However, heavy rains that caused flash floods in upland areas raised the total number of confirmed casualties to 68 people as of October 2, 2005.

14. Damage to homes, livestock, crops and water supplies is relatively extensive within affected coastal districts. According to representatives of a GVN/Donor/NGO Disaster Management Working Group (DMWG), which met on October 2, an estimated 200,000 people lack food and perhaps a greater number of people suffer drinking water shortages caused by seawater penetration in dug wells as far as three to four kilometers inland. About 1,500 houses in the coastal area have been completely submerged while another 15,500 houses lack proper roofs. Hundreds of schools and public health clinics remain submerged or heavily damaged. Saltwater and dead livestock contaminate water wells used for drinking. According to Vietnam News Agency report of October 2, Typhoon Damrey has caused an estimated VND 3.3 trillion (roughly USD 207 million) in damages to districts in Vietnam's northern mountains and coastal areas.

15. On September 28-29, DMWG disaster specialists from GVN, UNDP, UNICEF, IFRC and Oxfam UK conducted a rapid assessment to the worst affected coastal areas of Thanh Hoa, Ninh Binh and Nam Dinh provinces. Needs identified in the joint assessment report include: food; drinking water; pumps and technologies to purify contaminated water wells; medicine to prevent diseases (Note: Reuters allegedly reported localized cholera outbreak while a Ministry of Health representative denies that report); education materials for schoolchildren; "Household Kits" comprised of cooking materials, blankets, mosquito nets, etc.; clothing; and temporary shelters. The DMWG members expressed particular concern for the socio-economic needs of these farming communities and food stock security due the long-term impact of seawater on crops and

future income levels.

16. According to the MOFA representative, GVN has allocated VND 420 billion (USD 26 million) for disaster preparedness measures such as sea dike reinforcement and relief efforts including rice and dry noodles distributions. (Comment: The Embassy is seeking confirmation of this figure. End Comment.) The Vietnam Red Cross and Buddhist organizations have launched fundraising campaigns. The Fatherland Front has reportedly raised VND 18 billion (USD 1.1 million) from the overseas Vietnamese community.

17. Several international organizations have pledged support for disaster relief. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is providing USD 500,000 to Vietnam Red Cross for food, shelter, and 900 boxes of Household Kits. UNDP has mobilized USD 50,000 for coordination support and has pledged an additional USD 100,000 in emergency relief funds. UNDP is dispensing pre-positioned supplies/household kits while Oxfam UK has pledged USD 100,000 for assistance activities.

18. According to the MOFA representative attending the DMWG meeting, the Prime Minister has called upon foreign nations including those without embassies in Hanoi to provide emergency relief assistance. The GVN has also requested support from DMWF to serve a donor coordination role.

19. Mission Vietnam will continue to monitor the situation and is considering to request emergency disaster assistance.

MARINE